

REMARKS

Claims 2-9 and 11-15 are presently being examined. In the Office Action, Claims 2-4, 6 and 14 are indicated as allowed. Claim 1 is cancelled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 5, 7 and 8 are amended to depend from allowed Claim 2, and therefore should be allowed. Claims 9, 11 and 12 are amended to more clearly define the claimed invention. New Claims 16, 17 and 18 having the features of Claims 5, 7 and 8 respectively, and depending from allowed Claim 4 are added. Claims 16, 17 and 18 should be allowed in view of their dependence on Claim 4. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is entered. It is believed that this amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action mailed on December 11, 2007.

Independent Claim 9, as amended, is to a junction block that has an inner cover with a horizontal plate, and a power block and connector blocks combined with the inner cover. Components such as circuit boards are disposed and connected within a space surrounded by the power block and the connector blocks. The power block and the connector blocks form the outside of the junction block and the combination of the power block and the connector blocks with the inner cover is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part with a guide part in a direction crossing the horizontal plate of the inner cover at right angles.

Independent Claim 11, as amended, is to a junction block that has an inner cover with a horizontal plate, and a power block and connector blocks combined with the inner cover. Components such as circuit boards are disposed and connected within a space surrounded by the power block and the connector blocks. The power block and the connector blocks form the outside

of the junction block, and the combination of the power block and the connector blocks with the inner cover is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part with a guide part in a direction crossing the horizontal plate of the inner cover at right angles. One of the connector blocks is combined with the inner cover, while the other connector block is combined with the power block.

Independent Claim 12, as amended, is to a junction block that has an inner cover having a horizontal plate and a power block and connector blocks combined with the inner cover. Components such as circuit boards are disposed and connected within a space surrounded by the power block and the connector blocks. The power block and the connector blocks form the outside of the junction block and the combination of the power block and the connector blocks with the inner cover is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part of the connector block or the power block into an engaging hole which communicates with a dead space in the power block or the connector block, respectively, in a direction crossing the horizontal plate of the inner cover at right angles.

CLAIM REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112:

In the Office Action, Claims 7 and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Reconsideration and removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action alleges that:

Claim 7, line 2, the limitation "the back" lacks antecedent basis;

Claim 12 is vague and indefinite; and

Claim 14, line 8, the limitation "the slide-engaging part" lacks antecedent basis.

Claims 7, 12 and 14 have been amended in a manner to overcome this rejection.

Claim 12 has been amended to be in independent form so as to be able to claim "an engaging hole which communicates with a dead space inside the power block or the connector block" as a sole means for engaging with a slide-engaging part, as a "guide part" for engagement with a slide-engaging part has already been claimed in Claim 9. Support for the amendment is found on page 19, lines 9-11 of the specification.

In view of the amendments to Claims 7, 12 and 14, removal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102:

In the Office Action, Claims 9, 11, 12, 13 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Shiina et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,597,578). Reconsideration and removal of this rejection are respectfully requested in view of the present amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

The Office Action alleges that Shiina et al. discloses a junction block having an inner cover (17) and a power block and connector blocks (12, 13, 14) combined with the inner cover (17), wherein the combination of the power block and the connector block with the inner cover (17) is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part (17b) with a guide part (13c, 14c) in a direction

crossing the inner cover (17) at right angles.

The direction of engaging is not clearly defined in the present claims, as the "inner cover" has a horizontal plate (37), a vertical wall (38), a vertical wall (39), etc., as discussed beginning at page 19, line 22 of the specification.

Claims 9 and 11 have been amended to more clearly define the direction of engaging. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims distinguish over Shiina et al. because in Shiina et al. alleged slide-engaging part (17b) engages alleged guide part (13c, 14c) in a direction parallel to alleged cover (17). The presently claimed horizontal plate of the inner cover corresponds to the entire portion of alleged cover (17) of Shiina et al. and the direction of engaging in the presently amended claims, which is at right angles to the horizontal plate of the inner cover, is distinct from the direction taught by Shiina et al. Removal of this rejection is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and the above remarks.

In the Office Action, Claims 5, 7, 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Sumida et al. (U.S. Patent 6,677,521). Reconsideration and removal of this rejection are respectfully requested in view of the present amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

Regarding Claim 9, in details of the rejection the Office Action recites components in the patent to Shiina et al. (not Sumida et al.) which allegedly correspond to features of the present claimed invention. In a phone call to the Examiner, it was determined that Claim 9 should not have

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/565,784
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been rejected in view of Sumida et al.

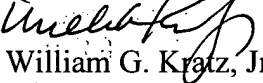
Claim 1 has been canceled and Claims 5, 7 and 8 have been amended to depend from Claim 2, which are allowed claims. Therefore, removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Claims 2-9 and 11-18, as amended, are believed to be patentable and in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

KRATZ, QUINTOS & HANSON, LLP


William G. Kratz, Jr.
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 22,631

WGK/JNB/ak

Atty. Docket No. 060070
Suite 400
1420 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 659-2930



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